~~Blogging?~~

Content Marketing 101

A 10 Minute Guide to Controlling the Masses Through Your Blog!

(oh yeah, and developing your online brand by Blogging)

by Ted Vieira

eBook Stuff....

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A Brief Introduction

What is the purpose of this eBook?

This is written for anyone who wants to use the power of blogging/content marketing to develop their online presence, but really just doesn't know where to start. You're wondering, *What Do I Write About? How Much Should I Write? How Often Should I be Blogging?*

Does this cover everything?

No. Using blogging as content marketing is an artform that will, like any other artform, improve the longer you've been doing it. You'll learn more technique; you'll find out what works and gets reactions and what doesn't.

Hopefully though, by the time you finish this short primer you should have a general overview of blogging and content marketing so you can use these tools to start developing your brand online.

Stay Tuned

There's a very good chance I could continue to add more material here as time permits. (although that would really start to challenge the "10 Minute Guide" part of the title.

But if that does happen, check http://imageperceptions.com/ebooks from time to time to see whats new. (with this ebook and new additions to the library)

What's In This eBook?

Chapter 1: Still Don't Get Blogging? How About Content Marketing?

Chapter 2: 5 Reasons Why Blog Based Sites are Sexy!

Chapter 3: Less is More

Chapter 4: The Power 10 List – Home Run Blog Topics

Chapter 5: 5 Easy Ways To Create Better Blog Post Titles

Chapter 6: Don't Leave Your Readers Hangin' – Blog Consistently

Chapter 7: How to Handle Negative Blog Post Comments…
And Use Them To Your Advantage!

Chapter 8: 5 Ways to Gain More Readers

Chapter 9: Add Photos that Get Your Content Noticed

Chapter 10: Do You Write Your Copy for People or for Google?
(Optimizing Your Text)

Final Thoughts: Why Blogging is Like Sex

Okay, this is supposed to be a 10 minute guide to Content Marketing. That works out to be about a minute per chapter. So...

Ready... Set... Go!

Still Don't Get Blogging?
How About Content Marketing?

For many of my clients, particularly those above the age of 40, they haven't been blogging, they don't get blogging, and they don't understand how blogging is so important to business.

To them, the term blogging itself conjures up images of someone leaning back on their couch, drinking their mocha-china-frappa-latte, typing about what they did today, what their friends said about their other friends, and how they're angry at this big corporation for the destruction of something.

Okay, lets lose the term, "Blogging."

How About "Content Marketing?"

Ahhh, that sounds like a business thing! That sounds like something your company should be doing to develop it's brand, right?!? When I tell my clients, "It's not really Blogging, it's Content Marketing." it's easier for them to get the concept.

It's all about the Content, baby!

Your site's content is what helps your clients or customers understand how you can help them. Your site's content is what tells Google who they should be sending to your site. The more relevant content you have on your site, the more confidence you'll build with your clients and the more Google will have to grab onto when it's visiting your site.

By putting out more and more helpful and relevant content, more frequently, the better chance you and your business have in developing your brand online, and to develop your reputation as an authority in your industry.

So which is it – Blogging or Content Marketing?

It's both. It is Content Marketing in a blog format. Your doing regular posts, engaging your readers and inspiring comments and conversation. That's what blogging is. It's not just a one way blast telling people what you want them to know or think. It's engagement. It's two way conversation. That's what you want to develop on your site. And the material is all about your products, services, and how you can help your readers/clients/customers. That's Content Marketing!

Hope This Helps!

So if you've been a little confused about how blogging is the way to go, I hope this gives you a way to look at it that you can sink your teeth into.

5 Reasons Why Blog Based Sites are Sexy!

I was originally going to go with the title, "The Benefits of Having a Blog Based Site," but I'm trying to work on my attention grabbing titles. Let me know your thoughts on that.

Having a site that is primarily driven by it's blog might not be the best way to go in every situation, but I think for most businesses and people, it is an incredibly effective way to better develop your online identity. Here are 5 reasons why I think so…

1. Sheer Volume of Content

Just talking about square footage on the web, having a blog on your site helps you dynamically. For example, maybe when you first had your site created it might've only had 10 – 15 pages of relevant content for Google to take a look at and index. Say you, or someone at your company contributes 2 – 4 blog posts a week about the company's products or services. At the end of a year's time, now you've got maybe 100 – 200 pages of relevant content for Google to take a look at. Hmmmm, impressive.

2. More Stuff for Google

The cool thing about blogs these days is it's not always just a page of your latest posts. For the blog based sites I design, I use WordPress (self hosted, not WordPress.com hosted) with the Genesis Framework and StudioPress child themes. This allows me to set up more of an online magazine type layout that is more visually exciting that just a coming to a page of your recent blog posts. It is more of a complete website than just a blog.

The cool thing about using this set up...
Now, when you post a new blog entry it…

- creates it's own page
- displays a teaser/excerpt (this is actual content to Google) on the home page
- displays a teaser/excerpt on the Blog page
- displays an teaser/excerpt on any category page you've assigned the post to
- and might also display a post teaser/excerpt on any page where you've included a "Featured Post" or "Recent Post" widget. (this could mean it actually adds fresh content to every page on your site)

Google loves fresh content. If you put up a site that is constantly adding fresh content throughout it's pages, this is a good thing. Much better than a site that just has static information about you, your products and services.

3. Direct Connection and Dialogue with Your Audience

Having a blog based site, or at least an active blog on your site, this gives you a direct pipeline with your audience, for lack of better term. (I've heard Chris Brogan say that "audience" isn't a great label because it makes it sound like they are just there to observe – instead you want to engage them; have them participate so you can learn too. I agree with that.)

If you're not engaging with your customers and clients you are missing out on information that could really determine your company's future and the level of value you could be offering (and revenue you could be generating).

4. Keeping Your Information Current

Blogs allow you to continually provide the most current information about yourself or your products and services. If people know there is always new information on your site they are more likely to come back from time to time. This doesn't hurt.

5. Demonstrate Your Authority

Continually putting out helpful and insightful information about what you do can help you to develop a role of authority. The more useful information you're putting out there, the more people can look at you as an authority in your field; the place to go when people need information about your industry. This helps build trust. Kind of significant.

Okay, these are just 5 reasons having a blog based site is a way to go. As mentioned in reason #2, having a blog based site doesn't mean it's just someone's blog and when you get there you just come to a page of their latest posts. It can be complete site that just revolves around a blog at it's core. This site, www.ImagePerceptions.com is a blog based site.

Sometimes Less is More (effective)

When it comes to blogging, this is usually a good rule of thumb.

A Couple Reasons Why...

1. Nobody likes to read.

A shorter post is more likely to be read. If someone comes to a post and it's a novel in length, they might start to skim, but many will just move on to a blog where someone will say the same thing with less words.

2. A lot web content is now being read on a smartphone or other mobile device.

If a post is too long it definitely won't be read on an iPhone.

Brevity is KING!

The Power 10 List – Home Run Blog Topics

Successful blogging means putting out useful information in an enjoyable style that keeps people looking forward to what's coming next. Your readers are looking to you for your wisdom, guidance and insights.

The Power 10 List

You know you have people asking you questions all the time about what you do. You're constantly answering a variety of questions. Some of them simple, some complex. What are some of the common issues people ask you about? That's where you start.

Start thinking about it. What are 10 of the topics that people ask you about all the time? Make a list of those 10 topics.

In The Words of DJ Lance Rock, "Ah – Break – It – Down"

Once you've got your Power 10 list, start breaking down each of those topics into subtopics. Break those subtopics down even further. Go as far as it seems reasonable.

Now when you start typing your post, write as if you're speaking directly to the people who asked you that question.

A lot of my clients aren't sure what to blog about for their business. This is a simple method, along with listening and following up on questions and comments prompted by your posts, to give you plenty of great topics to write about. And it will be information that speaks directly to YOUR audience.

5 Easy Ways To Create Better Blog Post Titles

It's widely accepted that the titles are the first important attractor, determining whether or not someone will actually read your blog post. They are like text versions of thumbnails.

If you're looking at a page of thumbnails, you'll click on the most interesting, compelling thumbnail first, to view the full image. The titles of your posts act in the same way. That's why your titles are so important. There is so much content available out there everyday. You want to make sure that yours stands out – and gets read!

Here are five tools you can use to create more compelling post titles:

Lists

People LOVE lists. A list gives someone hope that they can accomplishing something using a given number of steps.

5 Easy Ways To Create Better Blog Post Titles
10 Steps to Lighting Nude Photography
7 Marketing Tips To Double Your Business

How To…

Again, your providing someone a quick solution for something. EVERYONE is looking learn something. "How To" is a great way to get their attention.

> How To Lose Weight Without Dieting
> How To Triple Your Twitter Followers in One Day
> How To Make Money From Facebook

Juxtapose Subjects

This is an interesting way to capture people's attention. A blog post title that presents an unusual combination can be compelling, the same way that it's used in photography. You see a photo of a beautiful woman in a gorgeous evening gown standing in the middle of a garbage dump – it get's your attention.

> Why Blind Monkeys Make Great Babysitters
> Using the One-Legged Kick Boxer Philosophy to Increase Your Income
> Why Jennifer Lopez Would Want to Work For You!

Invoke Popular Media Icons

People love their favorite movies, TV shows, bands, etc… If they see them mentioned, it gets their attention.

> Watching Seinfeld Will Improve Your Bottom Line
> The Depeche Mode Business Model
> Why Jennifer Lopez Would Want to Work For You!

Sex

Pretty obvious, huh? This may take a few different shapes and sizes along the way but it will never go out of style. Humans can't help but notice something when sex is involved.

> Why Blogging is Like Sex (one of my most read posts)
> Principles For Improving Your Profits AND Your Sex Life
> Why Jennifer Lopez Would Want to Work For You! (okay, used too much?)

Don't Leave Your Readers Hangin' – Blog Consistently

I have to say, I'm as guilty as anyone (really took some significant time off the blog this year) on this topic, so that means I can only improve right!?

The most successful blogs are being posted to daily (some with multiple posts per day), or at least on a regular basis, so that they retain their audiences interest and attention.

If you blog like a fiend for three weeks, then go quite for a month or so, then put out a post, then another one in three weeks…. you'll find a hard time finding an audience.

People like stuff they can look forward to. You've got a lot to offer so don't keep them waiting. And keep in mind that blogging doesn't have to be a huge task. Maybe one day your post might be 200-300 words, but then others might only be 25-50. It doesn't matter as long as it's valuable content.

Just don't leave 'em hangin'.

How to Handle Negative Blog Post Comments… And Use Them To Your Advantage!

So you've been blogging for a while, giving your readers juicy bits of info and engaging, entertaining prose. Working diligently to build your followers and community on your business site.

You're feeling pretty good about all this. You've developed your voice of authority. You're clients come to you to see what you think. It's going great!

Hey, this blogging stuff really does work!

Then you get that first negative comment.

Oh oh! WordPress has notified you that you've got a new comment awaiting approval. You're excited because, hey!, it doesn't look like spam! It's a real comment so let's go approve it.

Wait a minute! This commenter is telling you you're ideas are wrong, or maybe they're expressing disappointment in your products, services or your blogged thoughts.

Okay, better delete that negative comment quickly, right? Wrong, let it go through.

The best ways to address a negative blog comment is:

Approve the comment
Respond in a positive way
Never respond in a negative, argumentative voice
Respond in a helpful way
Politely correct the commenter if they are misinformed
Politely refer to facts that back you up
Make things right for this person if they're a dissatisfied customer with a legitimate complaint…

…and above all…

Always Be the Bigger Person

Always take the high road. Be gracious. Don't argue or get petty. Don't name call or do anything that is just going to steer the conversation into an argument and drag you both (especially you) down in the mud.

Why let the comment go through at all?

One

Your blog is just one place for this person to express their views. If they tried to come to you first but you shut them down without being heard, that may just "inspire" them to go somewhere else to start talking about you, and you'll have very little control at that point.

and Two

It will show your followers/clients/customers how you deal with complaints, opposing view points, criticism, and bullies, etc…. It gives you a fantastic opportunity to look like someone who handles things well, believes in what they are doing, and can take valid criticism in a gracious, mature fashion. That can turn this situation from a negative into a blessing!

5 Ways to Gain More Readers

Looking to inspire more readers to come back for more? Here are five things you can do that could help.

1. Say it with Less

This kind of follows up on my last post. Make it easy for your readers to get your message. Don't give them three paragraphs when you can say it in one. (or less!)

2. Make it Useful

What are the questions your customers/clients always ask you? Do your posts answer those questions? Offer information and help that your readers are looking for. Rather than putting out "filler" content just to blog more frequently, work on having better more powerful and useful content. Even if it means you miss a day here or there.

3. Make it about Them

Always focus your attention on your readers. Is your writing inspiring to them? Something that helps them? Something they can use? Or is it just you talking about you.

4. Tell a Story

It's the most memorable and relatable way we learn.

5. Spread the Word

Kind of obvious, but…. Don't keep it a secret. Make sure you engage on the social media platform in interesting ways to let people know you've written something that they might be interested in and point them back to your posts.

You've Got a Lot to Offer

You know about your business. You're an expert at what you do and how you do it. Keep refining your communication skills so that your helpful information gets across to your readers and more and more of them will want to come back again.

Add Photos that Get Your Content Noticed

You've been waking up every morning, diligently creating great new content for your site. Posting it to your blog to help the masses and to draw them to you.

Your content is pure gold, but you're still kind of new on the block and you're not well known yet.

What can help?

A couple things…

Strong Post Titles

I've done a few posts on the importance of an effective blog post title. But today I want to focus on the visual.

Strong, Effective Featured Image for Your Post

There are so many options online for your readers to choose from. A strong featured image for

your post might just be the thing that makes them click on it to read more.

Ultimately it should have something to do with the content of the post, but don't get too nitpicky about that. Get something that's close enough, but really is an attention getter.

You do want to get close to the theme of your content. If you add a provocative photo of a beautiful woman, and then your content is about the newest theories in quantum physics, then it might not do anything to really help your traction and build your readership.

Now, I added a photo of a car that costs more than most people's houses. Does it relate to this content? In this case yes, because I'm talking about images that get you noticed. But if I were actually talking about something like, "*The top ten pizza toppings requested in Las Vegas, Nevada,*" this photo would not be the way to go.

Also…

Studies have also shown that people are more attracted to reading posts that include at least one image. To paraphrase my good friend, photographer, Garrett Winslow, "Would you rather read a magazine with, or without photos."

Well put.

Do You Write Your Copy for People or for Google? (Optimizing Your Text)

The answer is… Both, of course. When you're putting together the copy for your website, you ultimately want to write copy that is search engine optimized (SEO).

What Does Search Engine Optimized Mean?

When it comes to the text on your site, it means that your text includes valuable keywords that would most likely be used in a search for the kind of services or products you offer.

So when you are writing the copy for your site, use a keyword every chance you get (without getting ridiculous – Remember you're still writing for people too).

Example, if you own a camera shop…

Worse Option: This camera will help you take amazing photographs!

Better Option: The Canon EOS 5D Mark II will help you take amazing photographs!

The better option provides a specific keyword phrase that someone might be searching for. Instead of saying “camera” say Canon EOS 5D Mark II. See what I mean?

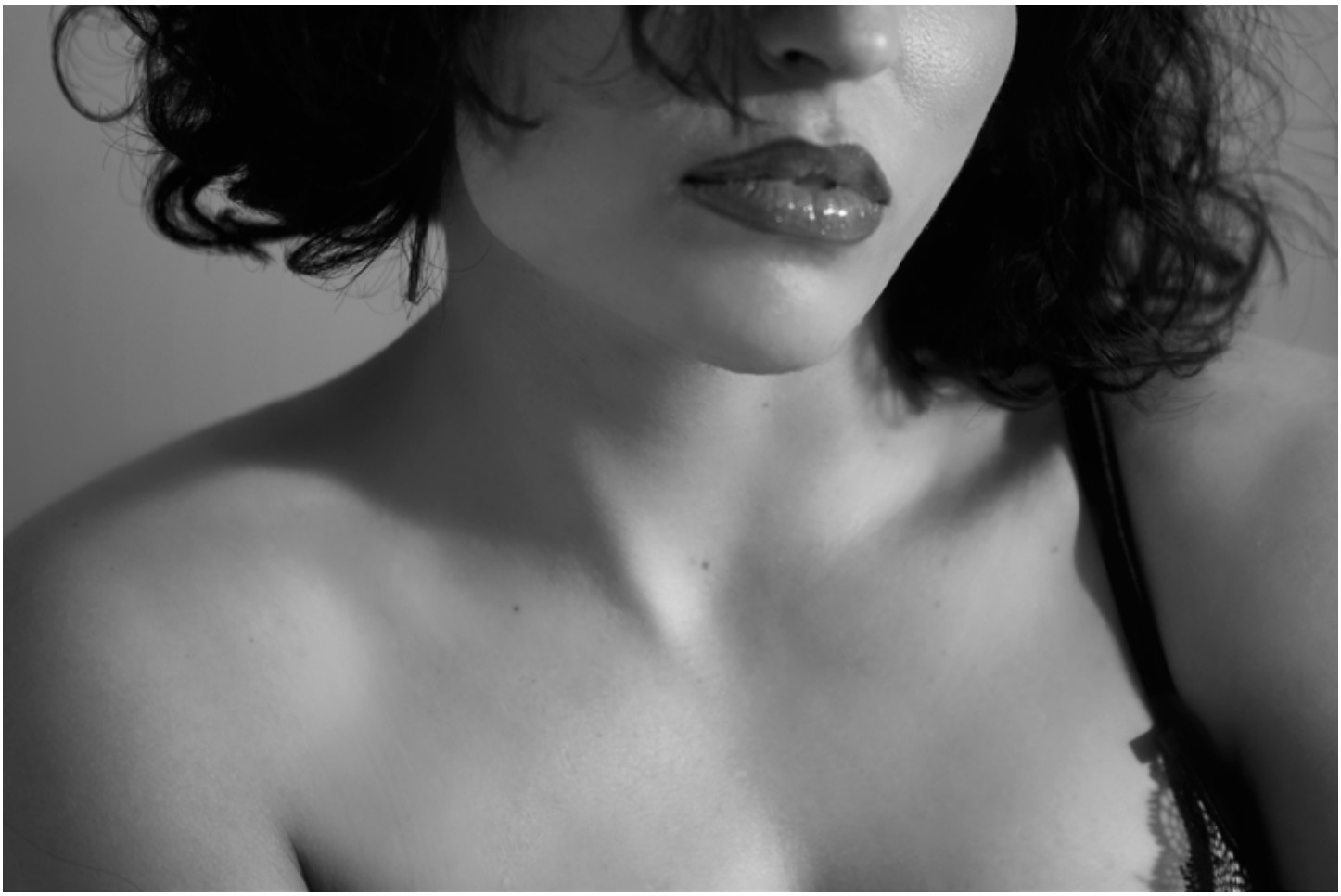
Clever is Good, Right?

While it can be entertaining, it can often confuse both your readers AND Google. It is good to be entertaining. That can be a powerful way to develop followers, but stick to keywords, and industry standards when you can. It will help Google and your readers more easily understand and identify with your message.

Save the Best For Last? No.

No, hit people right up front with your best stuff. Pack your first couple lines or paragraphs with your best keywords and most important content of the post. Both Google and your readers will more quickly get what you want them to get out of your post. Then even if they don’t read the entire post, they got your main message.

Anyway, just some guidelines to keep in mind in putting together your content to help your site do better with your clients/customers AND Google.



Final Thoughts: Why Blogging is like Sex

Cool, glad I got your attention. Now, on with the show…

The more you do it, the better you get!

Well, okay, unfortunately this might not necessarily be true for everyone in either category. However there is a pretty good chance that…

- Your skills will develop
- You'll keep learning new ways to be more effective
- The more passionate you are about what you're doing, the better
- The more you are focused on other's needs, the better

So blog... Blog often... Develop your skills!

Focus on the needs of your audience and keep 'em coming back for more!